

Ornithological Notes made at Fraser's Hill, March, 1951¹

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THE following notes, mostly dealing with nidification, have been selected from data obtained during a stay of two and a half weeks at Fraser's Hill in March, 1951 (4-7 March and 11-26 March). Relatively little is known about the breeding seasons of the great majority of Malayan birds. In some cases, therefore, we have summarized the information previously published, where it throws light on the records published here, or we have drawn on notes made earlier at Cameron's Highlands. In addition to the birds included in the body of this paper we are also giving a list of other species observed during our stay at Fraser's Hill, with the object of confirming or supplementing the information available in the Annotated Checklist.

Fraser's Hill is situated on the Selangor-Pahang border and immediately to the north of the Gap (the Semangko Pass between Selangor and Pahang). The highest point of the floor of the pass is approximately 2,700 feet above sea-level. Fraser's Hill rises to about 4,000 feet. The observations given in this paper were all made between the Gap and the top of the Hill, or at one of these points, or at the Dairy Farm, Jeriau, at an elevation of about 3,300 feet. A short description of this area, and of Cameron's Highlands, is given by Robinson (1928: xvii and xvi). Earlier references to nesting in these localities can be found in the works cited in the list of references at the end of the present paper (with the exception of Smythies, 1940).

The arrangement, list numbers and names used here follow the Annotated Checklist of the Birds of Malaya (*Bull. Raff. Mus.*, 20, 1949).

171. *Ducula badia badia* (Raffles). Mountain Imperial Pigeon.

This bird is common and very conspicuous at and around Fraser's Hill. Courting displays, both acrobatic and vocal, were noted on a number of occasions during our stay there. Two nests were found, each containing a single egg. Madoc has also had a

¹ Completed and submitted for publication October 1951. We were much assisted in acquiring the data on which these notes are based by Mrs. F. G. H. Allen and 'Che Abdul Majid bin Long, Madoc's collector.

nest and egg between the Hill and the Farm on 31 December (1950). Bromley (1948: 212) reports a nest and egg found in the garden of Wray Bungalow on 7 January (1947). Molesworth and F. G. H. Allen had a nest with a fledgling in October (1950). January to March or April are probably the normal months for laying at Fraser's Hill. Edgar has found nests on Gunong Ijau, in Perak, as late as July (in Madoc, 1947: 6).

173. *Macropygia ruficeps malayana* Chas. & Kloss.

Little Cuckoo-Dove.

This bird, again, is very common at Fraser's Hill. Two nests were found, both containing eggs. Edgar (in Allen & Edgar, 1948: 51) reports a number of nests from the Larut Hills, and a few from Cameron's Highlands, found mostly in February. According to Robinson & Chasen (1936: 60) Kellow's collector discovered this species breeding in the hills near Taiping in January and February, and, rarely, in May. F. G. H. Allen records a nest and eggs in May. In the first week of August (1949) Madoc found four nests with eggs and one with a nestling at Fraser's Hill. A nest containing a single egg was found by Bromley (1948: 213) at Fraser's Hill on 17 August (1947). It would appear that either the breeding season is very extended, or else that there are two seasons: one in the first quarter of the year and another about August.

183. *Cuculus sparveroides* (Vig.) subsp.⁽²⁾ Large Hawk-Cuckoo.

From about 15 March onwards we frequently heard a typical plaintive Cuckoo call on various parts of the Hill, always from dense jungle, usually on the slopes below the residential area.

On the morning of the 21st Madoc spent a long time creeping through the jungle until he found a huge tree in which the bird was performing. Che Majid then felled a large clearing, making a lot of noise in the process; this did not worry the Cuckoo. Finally it was spotted on a very high leafless branch, and excellent views of it were obtained. The bird was very large for a cuckoo. The following features were prominent. Yellow feet and a blackish bill. The head and the wings apparently very dark brown. The upper breast, light chestnut; the lower breast and flanks, barred brown and white; the middle of the belly, white; the under surface of the tail, barred brown and white.

². We have no doubt of the species to which these notes refer. It is not possible to identify the race in the field, but it seems highly probable that the birds we were watching were the resident form, *Cuculus sparveroides boeki* Wardlaw-Ramsey, Checklist No. 183b.

Staring up at the bird some eighty feet above their heads, the observers were unable to obtain a complete view of the upper parts. On subsequent days we came across a pair of these birds calling to each other from perches in high trees along the road down to the Gap, at about 4,000 feet. We tried unsuccessfully to secure a specimen.

The earliest hour at which we heard the bird calling was 6.10 a.m.; the latest was 7.15 p.m. The bird produces two calls. The most common of these is an upward cadence of two notes *beep-BEEP*, repeated between ten and fifteen times. The call starts hesitantly, but gains speed after the second repetition. The second call is more rarely heard; and we got the impression that it is used only when one bird is being answered by another. It also is an upward cadence of two notes. The two notes are exactly alike *dee-dee*. The bird runs very rapidly and jazzily up the scale, reaches the highest pitch, and then descends about three tones before stopping. Both calls carry a great distance—fully half a mile, we think.

235. *Collocalia esculenta cyanoptila* Oberh.

Whitebellied Swiftlet.

Several of the colonies of this bird established in garages and deserted bungalows during the Japanese Occupation have been evicted, but a large colony remains in the garage at Buona Vista, Peninjau. At the time of our visit about 200 birds were breeding there: the majority of these nests contained eggs. There was also a solitary nest in the Girdle Road quarry. We have not determined the limits of the breeding season in this colony. We have seen plenty of fresh eggs in early August (1949) and 1st October (1951).

On the Gap road we watched a number of birds circling round the lower branches of a giant tree from which streamers of moss and lichen were hanging freely. At intervals the swiftlets appeared to fly straight at the moss, and we concluded that they were collecting nesting material. A close examination of the nests at Buona Vista showed that moss is, in fact, included in their structure.

240. *Apus affinis subfurcatus* (Blyth).

House-Swift.

A nest under the eaves of Wray Bungalow was sometimes occupied by a bird of this species, but apparently only for roosting purposes. Berwick (1947: 38) reports nesting at Cameron's Highlands at altitudes as high as 5,000 feet, but as yet there is no published record of breeding at Fraser's Hill.

268. *Eurystomus orientalis* (Linn.) subsp. Broadbilled Roller.

On the morning of 21 March we saw a single bird perching in a tree at about 4,300 feet. And the same evening we saw a party of five perching and feeding from a tree at over 4,000 feet. To the best of our knowledge, this species has not been recorded previously from such an altitude in Malaya. It may be supposed that these individuals were part of the movement of passage migrants and winter visitors, of two sub-species, which visit Malaya in the winter months; but Robinson (1927: 92) records that these migrants usually follow the islets in the Straits of Malacca.

336. *Coracina novaehollandiae larutensis* (Sharpe).

Whitevented Cuckoo-Shrike.

Throughout our stay on the Hill this species was most conspicuous. Pairs, and parties of up to five birds, spent much time flying high and aimlessly over the valleys, drawing attention to themselves by penetrating cries *shweep*. (Incidentally, the call is very similar to that of the Blue-green Magpie, *Kitta chinensis robinsoni*.)

On several occasions we noted that when a pair of these birds was perched in a tree one of them (presumably the male) would indulge in wing exercises which presumably were a court-ing display. It raised its folded wings backwards alternately, looking rather like a swimmer doing the "crawl". This display was accompanied by continuous calls of *shweep* in a higher pitch than the flight-call. The male also gave this display whilst perching close to the hen when she was brooding eggs in the nest described below.

On 19 March a nest was found. It was far out on a limb of a very high tree near the summit of Peninjau. The tree was quite unclimbable. As far as we could see the nest was a broad shallow cup placed across two arms of a horizontal fork. Externally it was covered with a pale green lichen. On 24 March we revisited the site and saw the female sitting on the nest. There was a high wind, and the bough was swaying considerably. This seemed not to worry her; but she flew away immediately when a clutter of chattering holiday-makers walked by. We estimated that this nest was about ninety feet from the ground, and about twenty-five feet out from the main trunk—within a foot or two of the tip of the branch. On 29 April we were able to visit the spot again and saw both adults bringing food to two large nestlings.

This species is accepted as resident in Malaya in the Annotated Checklist, but so far as we know no account has hitherto been published of nesting in our area.

356. *Kitta chinensis robinsoni* (O.-Grant).

Blue-green Magpie.

We saw this bird on three occasions: a single bird once, and a pair twice. This is the first time that one of us has encountered it, though he has been looking for it on every visit to Fraser's Hill for over fifteen years. On the basis of these observations we still consider it to be uncommon. The call is very like the *shreep* of the Whitevented Cuckoo-Shrike, but more acid.

385. *Turdinus brevicaudatus leucostictus* (Sharpe).

Streaked Wren Babbler.

A nest with young was found on 5 March. Subsequently a further three nests were discovered, all with eggs. In March 1947, Madoc and Che Majid found about fifteen nests at Cameron's Highlands, mostly containing eggs. Allen & Edgar (1948: 55) record "many nests containing eggs and young birds" found at Cameron's Highlands in February and March, and others as late as June. The latest record appears to be a nest containing two nestlings found by Berwick on the western slope of Gunong Berembun, Cameron's Highlands, on 7 July (1946).

387. *Pnoepyga pusilla harterti* Rob. & Kloss.

Pygmy Wren Babbler.

During this visit to the Hill we found so many nests of this species that we reached the conclusion that it must be one of the more common mountain species. But it is such a confirmed skulker that we never once saw a bird except those which flashed from their nests—thus giving away their extremely well-concealed positions.

On 5 March we found a nest containing one unfertile egg and one egg considerably incubated.

On 10 March we found a nest containing two eggs. After the bird had escaped down a gully we heard it utter a double whistle *Pee! Pou!*—just once. On the 13th we found that the eggs had been taken.

On 11 March we found an empty nest. Though empty, the bird flew out at our approach. On the 18th this nest contained two eggs. Unfortunately one egg was broken before we could measure it; the other measured 0.77×0.55 inches.

On 22 March we found a nest containing two eggs, one of which was broken. The other measured 0.78×0.55 inches.

On 26 March we found a nest containing two fresh eggs. One which we measured was 0.80×0.60 inches.

Every one of these nests was of a standard type. Built externally of green moss, lined internally with black fibre. The entrance was at the side—the bank on which the nest was built forming one wall of the entrance—and usually partly curtained by hanging moss or vegetation. All the nests were built on vertical banks at the side of deeply-shaded jungle paths at about 4,000 feet. The moss of the outside of the nest blended very closely with the living moss on the bank.

Breeding has been reported from Cameron's Highlands by Allen & Edgar (1948: 356), who say that the main nesting season seems to be February to April, but active nests have been seen as late as June. Madoc found two nests, both with eggs, at Cameron's Highlands during the third week of March 1947. In August 1949 he found several disused nests of this species at Fraser's Hill, but in the absence of the birds was not then able to make a positive identification.

390a. *Stachyris nigriceps davisoni* Sharpe.

Graythroated Tree Babbler.

We now know that it is not this species which is responsible for the numerous domed nests found alongside jungle paths. Such nests are usually those of the White-gorgetted Flycatcher. This species also builds domed nests at the sides of paths, but they are less compact structures than those of the Flycatcher, and the ones we have seen were at the foot of a bank—virtually on the ground.

On 11 March, Major Prendergast pointed out a nest at the foot of a bank at the side of the Girdle Road, Peninjau. We saw a bird fly off, but observed only that the sides of the face were grey. Two days later Che Majid snared a bird on the nest, and we identified it as this species. We noted a narrow white streak above and behind the eye; and a broad white moustachial streak. Head dark grey above, paler below. The remaining upper parts dark brown; underparts pale buff. The nest was not a spherical structure: it was a cup with an almost separate dome over it. The entrance was at the side—facing along the bank instead of outwards. The cup was fairly substantially made of dead bamboo leaves and bracken, lined with fine grass. The dome was loosely composed of bamboo leaves. The White-gorgetted Flycatcher inserts its nest into festoons of moss or into a thick bed of dead

leaves; this nest was not "inset" in this way, but took advantage of the cover afforded by a bank and drain on which grass and ferns were growing profusely. The eggs were fairly fresh. They are pure white, unspotted, and with a slight gloss. They measure 0.80×0.60 inches, 0.78×0.59 inches and 0.77×0.58 inches.

On 23 March we found another nest alongside a path. The situation was just the same—at the foot of a bank, not inset, but partly hidden by grass and ferns. The entrance was at the front. As before, the dome was very loosely constructed of bamboo leaves. The cup was bamboo leaves and bracken, with a lining of finely macerated bark. The three eggs were in an advanced state of incubation. They measured 0.75×0.56 inches, 0.74×0.56 inches and 0.72×0.56 inches. Che Majid snared the bird the following day. Before releasing it, we took successful photographs of its head.

These are the first nests of this species that we have found. Breeding has previously been reported at Maxwell's Hill, Perak (early May), and Cameron's Highlands (last week of February) by Allen (in Allen & Edgar, 1948: 55) and from the summit of the Semangko Pass, alt. about 2,700 feet (on 5 July) by Bromley (1948: 212).

397. *Stachyris chrysaea chrysops* Richm.

Goldenheaded Babbler.

This is a common species on the Hill. By mimicking the whistling call it is possible to draw the birds within three feet of one. A pair were seen carrying nesting material on 11 March, but we were unable to find the nest. In 1947, Madoc had two nests at Cameron's Highlands (altitude 4,500–4,750 feet) at the end of March, both with eggs. Robinson (1928: 211) says that this species breeds on Fraser's Hill about the end of January, "but eggs have not, as yet, been obtained."

399. *Garrulax mitratus major* (Rob. & Kloss).

Chestnutcapped Babbling-Thrush.

400. *Garrulax erythrocephalus peninsulæ* (Sharpe).

Redheaded Laughing Thrush.

Both these birds were fairly common, but we saw no indication of nesting. Allen & Edgar (1948: 54) report two nests of the second species, *erythrocephalus*, from Cameron's Highlands: one, containing two eggs, was found at the end of February; the other, with a single nestling almost ready to leave, on 4 April. On 27 March (1947) Madoc found a pair building at Cameron's Highlands; the nest was destroyed before the hen had laid. This

suggests that there should have been evidence of breeding at Fraser's Hill in March. At the same time Gibson-Hill (1950: 114) reports a nest of the allied *G. l. lugubris* (S. Muller), containing two fresh eggs, taken by F. G. H. Allen and Molesworth at Fraser's Hill on 29 October. We can find no other local records of nests of the three Malayan members of the genus *Garrulax*.

401. *Leiothrix argentea* tahanensis (Yen).

Silver-reared Mesia.

As common as ever at Fraser's Hill. On 7 March we found a deep cup-shaped nest in a Senudok bush (*Melastoma malabathricum* Linn.) at the bottom of the Lodge garden. A bird flew off at our approach, but we were unable to see it and we thought that the nest was that of a Bulbul. On 11 March it contained a single egg, and on the following day there were two. On the 14th Madoc and Che Majid concealed themselves in the scrub and watched for about an hour. Presently a party consisting of no less than four Mesias, two Chestnut-capped Babbling-Thrushes and one Long-tailed Sibia approached extremely noisily through the bracken. They chose to perch in some giant grass about two feet above the watchers' heads. From there they shouted at the tops of their voices. At the end of that performance one of the Mesias was seen to have slipped onto the nest, and the escort then dispersed. Madoc stalked the nest, and was able to see the female Mesia at a range of two feet.

The nest was a deep cup, $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches in diameter and 2 inches deep. It was slung at seven points from the fine stems of a little vine which trailed amongst the branches of the bush. Externally it was compounded of dead leaves, bracken, moss and the roots of an epiphytic plant. It was rather sparsely lined with the black fibres of a fern or palm.

The eggs measured 0.84×0.67 inches and 0.87×0.65 inches. The shell is thin, fine and rather glossy. The ground colour is white. Rich madder-brown spots are concentrated mostly at the broader end.

On about 10 March, Che Majid detected a pair of Mesias carrying dead leaves and moss very energetically. He found they were building a nest in a festoon of bracken hanging over the Girdle Road. Unfortunately they abandoned the work after two days.

In spite of the fact that this bird is widely distributed and common in open areas in the main mountain chain at altitudes above 3,000 feet, no previous account has been published of nesting in Malaya.

420. *Irena puella malayensis* Horsf. & Moore. Fairy Bluebird.

We saw no signs of this species, though in January it had been common at the Gap and on the road up the Hill.

424. *Pycnonotus dispar caecilii* Deignan.

Blackcrested Yellow Bulbul.

This species is certainly common at the Gap, but it appears very rarely to ascend the Hill; we have never seen it there before, or during, this visit. Since then, Allen has seen the species at Peninjau on 10 June, 1951.

431. *Pycnonotus goiavier personatus* (Hume).

Yellowvented Bulbul.

We regularly saw one or two pairs of this typical lowland bird on scrubby slopes in the residential area of the Hill. At Jeriau Farm we saw a bird carrying nesting material.

447. *Muscisylvia leucura leucura* Hodgs.

Whitetailed Blue Robin.

On the 21st, hastening up a path in a gully immediately below Wray Bungalow, Mrs. Allen frightened one of these birds off its nest. Later, when we visited the nest, the female flew from the nest low and straight across the gully, and disappeared into the scrub on the other side. There was no time (and little light) for a really good view. We got the impression of a dull brown bird with a narrow but distinct white band down each side of its tail.

Later Che Majid put a snare at the entrance to the nest. He reported that, watching from concealment, he saw the bird carefully set aside his noose on two occasions! On one occasion the blue male assisted his brown mate in this task. But on the 23rd the female was snared successfully, and we were able to examine her very thoroughly before releasing her. There is little to the field description: she is just a pale brown bird, rather like a female Niltava, but lacking the blue shoulder patches. The white marks on the tail show only when it is fanned. Evidently it is fanned in flight, for we noticed the apparent white marginal band on three occasions. Actually, it is not marginal, and does not extend the whole length of the tail (but this certainly is the impression in the field); in fact, the outer pair of tail feathers is immaculate, and the white is mostly on the basal half of the succeeding pairs.

The nest was a large ball of vegetation, 8 inches in external diameter. It was composed of tree-fern fibres and leaves, skeleton

leaves and a small quantity of liverwort. The entrance, nearly 2 inches in diameter, was halfway down the front. The nest was placed on the almost vertical bank at the side of the gully. It was poorly concealed amongst the ferns and grasses growing on the bank (though we must admit that we had passed up and down that path several times without seeing it, and without disturbing the birds!). Trees growing ten feet higher up the bank provided deep shade.

The nest contained two eggs in an advanced state of incubation. They measured 1.00×0.67 inches and 0.97×0.68 inches. They were a dull pink, thickly and finely blotched all over with a scarcely distinguishably darker shade. They were almost glossless.

No previous account has been published of nesting in Malaya.

464. *Myiophoneus robinsoni* O.-Grant.

Malayan Whistling Thrush.

Madoc had located these birds breeding in a gully below the Golf-Course in September 1950. He deduced that the birds clung closely to a very limited territory. So, during this long March visit, we explored the gully many times; but we could not locate the birds. However, in early September 1951, F. G. H. Allen saw the birds in the same locality as Madoc's nest. He disturbed one bird which was actually perching beside a nest which might have belonged to this species, but which was definitely old. A few weeks later, on 1st October, Madoc found a bird most determinedly haunting the immediate vicinity of his last year's nest. It remained in dense cover, calling, whilst he and Che Majid made a close but unsuccessful search for the nest.

Madoc's notes of his September nest have not been published previously, and so are reproduced here in full.

On 23 September, 1950, he was working down the steep bed of the little Sungei Tras (Fraser's Hill), about half-a-mile below the golf-course and at a little under 4,000 feet. He noticed a large cup-shaped nest built on an epiphytic fern growing on a hanging liana. Climbing up the steep, thickly-wooded sides of the ravine, he was able to look over the rim of the deep cup; but he concluded that it was old. About half-an-hour later, returning upstream, he disturbed a bird off the nest when he was still 100 yards away. He was unable to see more than the shape and generally blackish appearance of the bird as it dived off the nest and flashed up the bed of the stream almost at water-level. He

now climbed up into the tree from which the liana was suspended and, looking down, was able to see two whitish eggs. That afternoon he watched in concealment for two hours, and the following morning he performed another vigil of two hours, but failed to see the bird. However, on those two days, as he followed the path down the revine, three times he disturbed a very similar blackish bird. On each occasion it seemed to take wing off the bank at the side of the path, where Madoc presumes it was seeking food in the bare earth under the overhang. It was very wary, and its flight was very swift and direct, taking it out of sight amongst the foliage before the eye could register more than a general impression of a bluish-black bird.

On the 27th, Madoc sent Che Majid up the Hill; the latter found the nest without difficulty. He watched it from concealment for three days. He saw the bird on the nest several times; but in the gloom of the valley he was unable to see its colours or even get a clear view for a shot. He reported that it was most wary and cunning. At one time or another he saw both birds. Once, when he was constructing a little hide of giant fern fronds, he found that both birds were watching his every movement from the branches of a tree above his head. Finally, in desperation, he shot the parent on the nest; one egg was completely destroyed, and the other was too broken to preserve, though it has provided a basis for dimensions and description.

Che Majid reported that, when disturbed from the nest, the bird invariably dived down and flew very close to the ground—as Madoc had seen it do on the 23rd. Che Majid heard the call several times—a single high-pitched and prolonged *cheeh*; rather like the acid call of a Forktail. (Since then, Madoc himself has heard the call. He has noted it as a single *zreep*, repeated at irregular intervals. It certainly resembles the note of a Forktail; but the Forktail usually rattles out several consecutive notes.)

The bird shot on the nest has been identified as this species. Madoc notes that in a good light it is mostly glossy black with a blue wash; there is a fairly prominent shiny patch of deep blue at the angle of the wing. There was some white on the axillaries and at the bases of other feathers of the underparts; but these would not show in the field. The upper mandible was mostly brownish horn, and the lower mandible mostly dull yellow. The legs and feet were blackish.

The nest is a very solid, thick-walled structure measuring externally about $7\frac{1}{2}$ inches in diameter by 4 inches high. The deep, straight-sided cup is 4 inches in diameter and $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches

deep. It was firmly attached to the dense fibrous roots of an epiphytic fern, 15 feet above the bed of the stream. The fern itself was growing on a pendent liana, and it had overturned so that its leaves were growing downwards and its roots were at an angle on which the nest could be constructed. The nest materials were almost entirely black fibres of the tree-fern, with just a little stringy moss and a few dead leaves. The egg-chamber was not lined.

The eggs were an extremely pale bluish-grey with a peppering of very pale clover-brown spots. The less damaged one measured approximately 1.28×0.9 inches. Incubation was far advanced.

This is not a common species in Malaya, and to the best of our knowledge there is no previous published account of nesting in our area.

477. *Seicercus castaniceps butleri* (Hart.).

Greybreasted Flycatcher-Warbler.

This species seems to be fairly common on the Hill. But, like the Ashynaped Warbler, it is rather a skulker, moving about in dark gullies and in the thick scrub close to the road-edge.

On 5 March we watched a bird collecting the bright reddish-chestnut rhizomes from the base of a fern growing out of a high bank. This was beside the road leading to the Lodge. The bird carried its burden in under the overhang of the bank, and shortly emerged empty-billed. We waited until 13 March before examining the overhang. This was about fifteen feet above the road, and we found that behind the grass-fringed lip there was a long vaulted space nearly four feet high. A root projected from the roof; there, in semi-darkness, was the wren-like nest, tucked in behind this root. It appeared to be made entirely of the fern rhizomes. It was empty, but seemed to be nearly complete. A few days later we found that the nest had been torn out.

This interested us in roadside overhangs, and one morning we examined a considerable number of them along the Girdle Road around Peninjau. We must have found about twelve similar nests; all apparently old. Of course in such sheltered situations an old nest might remain intact for more than one season. We concluded that in spite of seeing one pair building, the breeding season of these Warblers must be at another time of the year. In no case did we find a nest under the overhangs formed by landslips during the last monsoon (i.e. December—January).

Previous accounts of nesting in Malaya are given by Robinson (1928: 249) and Edgar (in Allen & Edgar, 1948: 57). Gibson-Hill (1949: 203) also lists breeding reported from Fraser's Hill and the Larut Hills (Bromley, *in litt.*). These mention active nests found in February and April.

480. *Orthotomus cucullatus cinereicollis* (Sharpe).

Ashynaped Tailor-Bird.

During the three weeks on the Hill we at last managed to convince ourselves that this is the bird responsible for that little warbling song of five notes which is repeated all over the scale. We actually saw the bird open its bill and sing! There remains that other typical Hill Warbler song: the one beginning with two slow deliberate notes and then breaking off into a lovely long trill. In a dark gully Madoc saw a bird singing these notes, and he was fairly certain at the time that this, also, was the Ashynaped Warbler. But we think that this latter identification needs to be supported by further observations.

We made several notes on this Warbler's field appearance: chestnut forecrown, dark grey behind that. Light grey throat and breast, yellow abdomen. The remaining upper parts dull olive-green.

On the evening of 25 March, a pair of these birds was found feeding young in a nest. The nest was a small pouch of dry bamboo leaves tucked into the fork at the base of the fronds of a thorny rattan. It was about five feet above the ground. The rattan itself was about five feet from a path in thick, dark jungle. There were either two or three nestlings. We examined the nest next morning, and the parents came to demonstrate a few feet from us.

We also saw birds carrying bamboo leaves at Peninjau. They were building an exactly similar nest about 20 feet from the ground in a curtain of vines.

Now these certainly were not a Tailor-Bird type of nest. There was no question of its being sewn between leaves. Apart from its irregular shape, it was almost a cup. Records so far have been rather doubtful; (i) Oates (Fauna of British India) records a Tailor-Bird type of nest *shown* to Jerdon; but he doubts it, and thinks the species might nest in a hole in a tree. (ii) Madoc's observation at Peninjau in June 1934 (Madoc, 1947: 92) was made when he was not very experienced. He cannot defend it fully. (iii) Allen and Edgar (1948: 56) describe both a Tailor-Bird type nest—just like Madoc's—and also a bird

carrying bamboo leaves. Clearly, bamboo leaves could not be incorporated into a delicately-sewn Tailor-Bird type of nest; but the observation tallies with our recent observations. If we accept this as typical, there now remains the interesting problem of identifying the owner of the rare Tailor-Bird kind of nests made in the mountains.

491. *Muscicapa grandis decipiens* (Salvad). Niltava.

We saw several birds which were definitely paired, but found no indications that they had started building. Allen & Edgar (1948: 52-53) report four nests with eggs or young from Cameron's Highlands, three found in February and one on 2 April. Madoc discovered a nest with two fully fledged young at Cameron's Highlands on 26 March (1947).

508. *Muscicapa melanoleuca westermanni* (Sharpe).

Little Pied Flycatcher.

On the barren top of Peninjau, and again along a gloomy jungle path, we came on pairs which behaved as though they had a nest, but in neither case were we able to find one. Allen & Edgar (1948: 53) found a nest at Cameron's Highlands, altitude about 5,000 feet, in the second week of June; this is the only Malayan record known to us. Robinson (1928: 143) says "The breeding habits have not been observed in the Malay Peninsula, but judging from the dates on which young birds have been taken the nesting season is May and June."

509. *Anthipes solitaris malayana* (Sharpe).

Whitethroated Flycatcher.

Dr. Molesworth was correct in attributing to this species the most common type of domed nest to be found alongside jungle paths on the Hill. With the help of Major Prendergast, we established the identity of the nest's owner, and the type of egg, on 11 March. During the next fortnight we lost count of the total number of nests we found—old, current, and partly-constructed. On the morning of the 22nd we found five nests along one stretch of winding path—a total distance of perhaps 400 yards. Nests with eggs were as follows:—

- (i) on 11 March, c/2. Eggs found broken in the nest on the 13th;
- (ii) on 13 March, incomplete; on the 18th, c/1 measuring 0.77 × 0.55 inches;

- (iii) on 17 March, the highest nest we found, within 30 feet of the summit of Peninjau (4,360 feet), c/2, 0.80×0.56 inches and 0.78×0.55 inches;
- (iv) on 21 March, c/1, subsequently deserted, 0.78×0.56 inches.
- (v) on 22 March, c/2, 0.76×0.56 inches and 0.75×0.55 inches.

We consider that the early part of March represents the beginning of the species's breeding season. (It had been an unusually rainy February, which we think had set back the breeding season for most birds.) Most of the nests we found were in the course of construction, and all the eggs we examined were quite fresh. The nest is a fairly stout structure, usually placed in a sheltered spot. Thus it is "hard-wearing", and some of the apparently old nests that we found may have dated back to last year.

Nests are placed either in the face of a bank or, where no bank exists, on a slight slope. All the nests that we found were beside paths in rather gloomy places in thick jungle. None was more than two feet above the ground. The form built on the face of a bank is usually snugly tucked into a kind of moss with long bushy fronds; but some are built in pockets of dead leaves which lodge in crevices of the bank. The kind built on the ground (we saw few of these) is always sunk in a bed of dead leaves. The nest is globular; it has a thick and loose outer layer of dead leaves and bracken. Then there is a thick inner layer of bamboo leaves. Finally there is a thin but dense lining; this may be composed of dead leaves, or the macerated bark of a dead tree, or of skeleton leaves combed out until they look like matted grass. The entrance hole is oval—greater in width than in height—measuring about $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches \times 1 inch. Often it is partly concealed by a dead leaf hanging loosely over the top.

The egg-shell is thin, fine and slightly glossy. The ground colour is white. The markings are spots and small blotches of terracotta, forming a dense ring near the broad end, and becoming progressively less dense towards the pointed end. They look rather like small eggs of the English Robin. Judging by the number of nests found, this must be one of the most common species on the Hill; but we both noted how rarely it is seen, except near the nest. The nest is quite well-hidden, but often it is revealed by the noisy demonstration which the birds make as an intruder approaches. No previous account has been published of nesting of the Malayan form, but Gibson-Hill (1948: 218)

records that breeding had been reported from Fraser's Hill, alt. 3,500 feet, by Lewin in an MS note; apparently Lewin gave no details of the nest that he found, nor has he published any subsequently.

We were able to get very clear views of the species during this visit. We noted the orange-chestnut sides of the face; and in a good light we could see the thin black line under the white gorget. When demonstrating against an intruder, the birds utter a rapid, scratchy, scolding *churr*.

542. *Aethopyga saturata wrayi* Sharpe. Blackbreasted Sunbird.

In March 1947, Madoc found this species breeding at Cameron's Highlands, and its nest is not difficult to find. The birds were quite common on Fraser's Hill, but they were clearly not breeding.

551. *Arachnothera magna magna* (Hodgs.).

Streaked Spider-hunter.

Commonly seen during these three weeks on the Hill; but usually seen in flight, or feeding on the flower of a wild banana. Madoc has already recorded the Wagtail-like flight-call *ka-tik* and the *chisikik* when feeding or at rest. But he suspects that, like the Little Spider-hunter, *Arachnothera longirostra*, it also declaims from a song-post. Many times during this visit we have heard a repetitive call *E-get Get-a-let*. This has been uttered by an invisible bird in thick cover. Sometimes when we have crawled up close to it the song has ended abruptly, and has been followed by a typical Spider-hunter flight-call as the invisible bird flew away. We have never yet seen the bird which makes this call; but we think it must be this species.

On 21 March, Mrs. Allen found a nest which we think must have belonged to this species. It was built under a horizontal leaf of a banana in a jungle gully. It was a light but substantial cup made mostly of skeleton leaves. One part of the outer rim was sewn to the sloping underside of the leaf. We left it alone until the day of our departure; but on that day it was still empty and must have been deserted. There is at present no published account of this species breeding in our area though it is undoubtedly resident here (Gibson-Hill, 1949: 241-242).

569. *Munia striata subsquamicollis* (Baker).

Sharptailed Munia.

Fairly common. None of the known nesting sites appeared to be occupied.

Appendix A

The following birds were also noted, in addition to those mentioned above. Numbers and trinomials follow the Annotated Checklist.

55. *Spizaetus nipalensis alboniger* (Blyth). Several solitary birds seen.
59. *Ictinaetus malayensis* (Temm.). Seen once.
- 100a. *Amaurornis phaeicurus chinensis* (Bodd.). A solitary bird seen several times.
279. *Buceros bicornis* Linn. Seen once: heard several times.
281. *Psilopogon pyrolophus* S. Müll. Seen on many occasions.
293. *Picumnus innominata malayorum* Hart. Seen once.
299. *Picus flavinucha wrayi* (Sharpe). Seen once.
319. *Psarisomus dalhousiae psittacinus* (S. Müll.). Seen once.
333. *Hirundo tahitica abbotti* (Oberh.). Common.
343. *Pericrocotus solaris montanus* Salvad. Plentiful.
348. *Dicurus aeneus malayensis* (Blyth). Fairly common.
349. *Dissemurus remifer peracensis* (Baker). Seen several times.
354. *Oriolus cruentus malayanus* Rob. & Kloss. Seen only twice.
363. *Melanochloa sultanea flavocristata* (Lafr.). One party of three.
365. *Sitta azurea expectata* (Hart.). Seen once.
381. *Pomatorhinus hypoleucos wrayi* Sharpe. One party of four.
386. *Turdinus epilepidotus granti* (Richm.). A pair seen once.
399. *Garrulax mitratus major* (Rob. & Kloss). Fairly common.
400. *Garrulax erythrocephalus peninsulae* (Sharpe). Seen fairly frequently.
403. *Pteruthius erythropterus aeralatus* Tick. Seen once.
412. *Heterophasia picaoides wrayi* (O.-Grant). Common.
419. *Chloropsis hardwickii malayana* Rob. & Kloss. Seen once or twice.
443. *Microscelis maclellandii peracensis* (Hart. & Butl.). Seen once or twice.
450. *Copsychus saularis musicus* (Raffl.). Common in residential areas.
454. *Enicurus schistaceus* Hodgs. Seen twice.
473. *Phylloscopus trivirgatus parvirostris* Stres. Seen once.
485. *Rhipidura albicollis atrata* Salvad. Seen frequently.
518. *Motacilla cinerea melanope* Pall. One or two present throughout our stay.
553. *Dicaeum sanguinolentum dolichorynchum* Deign. Quite common.

Appendix B

The following four notes may also be of interest: unfortunately it was not possible to identify the birds with certainty.

188. *Cuculus poliocephalus lepidus* S. Müll. Lesser Cuckoo.

On several occasions we heard the call of an obvious cuckoo. It was similar to that of the European Cuckoo, except that it was extended to four notes of which the last two were exactly like the second. At a great distance

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the first syllable (although it is the accented syllable) does not carry as well as the -*coo-coo-coo*, which is all that one may hear. We think that it is probably made by the present species, though Robinson (1928: 86), who claims to have heard *lepidus* frequently on Korinchi Peak in western Sumatra, says that the two extra notes are on a falling scale. There are relatively few Malayan records for *lepidus*: Robinson gives its range in this country as the mountains of Selangor (and possibly Perak) and Gunong Tahan in Pahang: Gibson-Hill (1949: 92) lists two local specimens (Gunong Ulu Kali, Selangor, and Parit, Perak) and a visual record for Cameron's Highlands submitted by Edgar and F. G. H. Allen.

211. *Otus spilocephalus vulpes* (O.-Grant).

Mountain Scops Owl.

On a number of occasions on moonlight nights we heard a call exactly like the sound described by Smythies (1940: 311) as the call of *O. s. latouchii*: "a plaintive double whistle with the tone of a hammer on an anvil—plew-plew—a slight interval between the two notes." We presume that at Fraser's Hill this is made by the present bird, though according to Gibson-Hill (1949: 101) *vulpes* has been recorded formally only from Gunong Ijau (Perak), Gunong Mengkuang Lebar (Selangor) and Gunong Tahan (Pahang).

228. *Caprimulgus indicus jotaka* Temm. & Schleg.

Migratory Nightjar.

Driving down to the Gap at dawn on 8 March, Madoc put up about fifteen nightjars which had been resting on the road. He presumes that they were the present bird. Again at dusk on 11 March he saw two fitting among the trees at Peninjau. At dawn on the 24th we drove down the Gap road for the sole purpose of assuring identification, but we saw only one nightjar, and that insufficiently clearly to be sure of the species.

259. *Halcyon smyrnensis fusca* (Bodd.).

Whitebreasted Kingfisher.

Arriving at Jeriau Farm on 20 March we heard the typical flight or danger call of this species. The sound came from the shallow gorge in which the stream runs, but by the time that we reached the brink we were too late to identify the bird visually.

Three species of Kingfisher have been recorded at comparable heights in the Malayan hills. They do not include this species. Unfortunately we cannot find an account of the calls of any of them.

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MUS. 24, 1952.

Summary

This paper is based primarily on observations made on the birds of Fraser's Hill, Selangor (alt. about 4,000 feet), and the region of the Semangko Pass (the Gap) during residence on the Hill from 4-7 March and 11-26 March, 1951. The notes deal mostly with nidification, and include the first records of nesting in Malaya of—

Coracina novaehollandiae larutensis (Sharpe).
(Checklist No. 336).

Leiothrix argenteauris tahanensis (Yen).
(Checklist No. 401).

Muscisylvia leucura leucura Hodgs. (Checklist No. 447).

Brachypteryx leucophris wrayi O. Grant.
(Checklist No. 448).

Myiophoneus robinsoni O.-Grant. (Checklist No. 464).
and possibly of—

Arachnothera magna magna (Hodgs.).
(Checklist No. 551).

and the first description of the nest and eggs of—

Anthipes solitaris malayana (Sharpe).
(Checklist No. 509).